

AS LEVEL

Examiners' report

GEOGRAPHY

H081

For first teaching in 2016

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Version 1

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Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates. The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report. A full copy of the question paper can be downloaded from OCR.

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Paper 1 series overview

It was heartening to see that the quality of candidate answers in the third year of this component continues to improve. It is evident that centres are using the past components as learning tools, but caution is required to make sure that candidates' answer the questions asked of them, and not ones remembered from previous components.

There were examples of excellent diagrams being drawn to support candidate's written answers particularly to illustrate the formation of arches / glacial troughs / desert pavements and candidates should not be discouraged from doing so. A clear diagram, with appropriate annotations, can often give as much detail as a lengthy written explanation.

The longer 14 mark essay questions have a slight bias towards knowledge and understanding with Assessment Objective one, so candidates should remember that place specific detail, case studies and examples are needed. The 6 marks available for Assessment Objective two are given for the application of knowledge and understanding, so it is not enough just to list the AO1 detail; candidates must use it through analysis and evaluation to answer the question. Generally, the better essays are the ones that take a definitive position to agree or disagree with a statement. The alternative tends to take the format of 'here is one side of the argument and here is the other, and I sort of agree and disagree' which means candidate's usually struggle to score highly on AO2 due to the lack of engagement with the facts and how they might support a position on either side of the debate.

Again, handwriting is still a big issue. Candidates are asked to write a lot in the time given, and there is an inevitable decline in the standard. However, some writing is of such poor quality that examiners struggle to decipher what has been written. In cases such as these, candidates risk having marks not given because it cannot be read. It would be worth centres considering how to support the practice of handwritten assessments of a legible standard as part of exam preparation to aid candidates.

Section A overview

In this section candidates are required to answer one of three options. There were very few rubric errors where the candidates answered more than one option.

Option A – Coastal Landscapes overview

The vast majority of candidates chose to answer the coastal landscapes questions and it is clear that many rely on a grounding of GCSE learning before embarking on this. While this means that there is some good subject knowledge, there can be a danger of candidates answering questions as if it were a GCSE assessment, and without the depth required for an AS assessment.

Question 1 (a) (i)

Option A – Coastal Landscapes

1 (a) Study **Fig. 1** which shows patterns of temperature and precipitation for the Isle of Portland on the Dorset coast.

(i) Using evidence from **Fig. 1**, describe the patterns of temperature and precipitation of the Isle of Portland. [3]

Most candidates realised the need to discuss both temperature and precipitation for maximum marks. The majority commented on the highest and lowest for each. Very few considered the annual pattern or looked at the range throughout the year. Making clear the evidence from the figure makes it easier for the examiner to award credit.

It is important to remember that opposing statements, such as “temperature is highest in the summer. Temperature is lowest in the winter” will not be double credited when marking.

Question 1 (a) (ii)

(ii) Suggest **one** way in which the climate of the Isle of Portland influences weathering. [4]

Some candidates got confused between erosion and weathering. The question asks for one way, so examiners have to accept the first answer given. Candidates should take the time to plan their answer first as there is a danger that they drift into more than one response; the second and subsequent ones of which cannot be credited.

At times candidates made an incorrect link between the graph and weathering so for example discussing freeze-thaw weathering when the temperatures shown would not have caused this as they were always above freezing.

Question 1 (b)

(b) Explain the formation of coastal arches.

[8]

A large number of candidates were able to access Level 2 in this question, with some including a diagram to help support their answer which is always welcome. At times, these answers lacked the development to access Level 3. In order to do so, candidates need to make sure that they are demonstrating "thorough knowledge and understanding"; rather than just giving hydraulic action as a type of erosion, a L3 candidate would have linked this particular type of erosion to a specific part of the arch formation, namely the expansion of a crack at the tide line.

Some candidates continued the sequence on to a stack and stump but this was unnecessary as it was not called for in the question and may have used up valuable time..

Question 1 (c)

(c)* 'Coastal landscape systems change only slowly over long periods of time.' Discuss.

[14]

Many candidates understood the need to consider both short and long term change in the coastal landscape system. 8 marks were available for AO1, which was for knowledge and understanding of differing rates of change in coastal landscape systems which typically included the geology of the coastline, the type of waves and the extent to which there is human involvement. There are also 6 marks for the application of knowledge and understanding (AO2) to analyse and evaluate the extent to which coastal landscape systems change only slowly over time which is where candidates can weigh up their evidence and form a judgement.

The best answers talked in detail about specific places they had studied and why change had been slow/fast. The Holderness Coast and the Pakiri-Mangawhai Beach, New Zealand were two of the most common case studies.

Option B – Glaciated Landscapes overview

Roughly 20% of candidates attempted the Glaciated landscapes option. Given that it is not a topic covered at GCSE, the development of subject knowledge is good. While it is potentially more work to take on a new topic, candidates seem to be able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding at a higher level than in the coastal option and it therefore produces answers of a higher geographical standard.

Question 2 (a) (i)

Option B – Glaciated Landscapes

2 (a) Study **Fig. 2** which shows patterns of temperature and precipitation for Tulloch Bridge in the Grampian Mountains.

(i) Using evidence from **Fig. 2**, describe the patterns of temperature and precipitation of Tulloch Bridge. [3]

Most candidates realised the need to discuss both temperature and precipitation for maximum marks. The majority commented on the highest and lowest for each. Very few considered the annual pattern or looked at the range throughout the year. Making clear the evidence from the figure makes it easier for the examiner to award credit.

It is important to remember that opposing statements, such as “temperature is highest in the summer. Temperature is lowest in the winter” will not be double credited when marking.

Question 2 (a) (ii)

(ii) Suggest **one** way in which the climate of Tulloch Bridge influences weathering. [4]

Freeze-thaw was the most common answer for this question, given the range of temperatures shown in the graph.

There are four (AO2) marks available for this question; one is available for the simple naming of the way in which climate influences weathering. The additional 3 marks have been given for the water freezing and expanding, pressure exerted and released over time, and the rock breaking down as a result.

Candidates might find it useful to ask themselves “What do I mean?” or “So what?” as a way to develop their thinking to the fullest extent

Question 2 (b)

(b) Explain the formation of glacial troughs. [8]

A large number of candidates were able to access Level 2 in this question, with some including a diagram to help support their answer which is always welcome. At times, these answers lacked the development to access Level 3. In order to do so, candidates need to make sure that they are demonstrating “thorough knowledge”; rather than just giving abrasion as a type of erosion, a L3 candidate would have linked this particular type of erosion to the way in which the base of a glacier scraped away leaving a relatively flat valley bottom. As L3 calls for well-developed ideas candidates should always be thinking about how the point links back to the questions – using “so what?” or “what does that mean?” as internal questions to think about while writing would be helpful to ensure the extension of ideas.

Question 2 (c)

(c)* 'Glaciated landscape systems change only slowly over long periods of time.' Discuss. [14]

Many candidates understood the need to discuss short and long term change in the glacial landscape system. 8 marks were available for knowledge and understanding (AO1) of differing rates of change in glacial landscape systems which typically included the geology of the area, the type of glacier and the extent to which there is human involvement in the area. There are also 6 marks for the application of knowledge and understanding (AO2) to analyse and evaluate the extent to which glacial landscape systems change only slowly over time which is where candidates can weigh up their evidence and form a judgement.

The best answers talked in detail about specific places they had studied and why change had been slow/fast. Alaska and the Grand Dixence Dam in Switzerland were two of the most common case studies. Some of the best answers included discussion about areas and the rate of change with and without ice coverage.

Option C – Dryland Landscapes overview

Very few candidates attempted the dryland landscapes questions, but those who did were able to display a reasonable knowledge and understanding of the topic.

Question 3 (a) (i)

Option C – Dryland Landscapes

3 (a) Study **Fig. 3** which shows patterns of temperature and precipitation for In Salah in the Sahara Desert.

(i) Using evidence from **Fig. 3**, describe the patterns of temperature and precipitation of In Salah. [3]

Most candidates realised the need to discuss both temperature and precipitation for maximum marks. The majority commented on the highest and lowest for each. Very few considered the annual pattern or looked at the range throughout the year. Making clear the evidence from the figure makes it easier for the examiner to award credit.

It is important to remember that opposing statements, such as “temperature is highest in the summer. Temperature is lowest in the winter” will not be double credited when marking.

Question 3 (a) (ii)

(ii) Suggest **one** way in which the climate of In Salah influences weathering.

[4]

The question asks for one way the climate impacts weathering so examiners have to accept the first answer given. Candidates should take the time to plan their answer first as there is a danger that they drift into more than one response; the second and subsequent ones of which cannot be credited.

The most common answer here was exfoliation / onion-skin weathering as a result of the high temperatures in the graph.

Question 3 (b)

(b) Explain the formation of desert pavements.

[8]

Few candidates answered this option and most did so well, but there were one or two which lacked the development to access Level 3. In order to do so, candidates need to make sure that they are demonstrating “thorough knowledge”; rather than just noting that wind removes the smallest particles from the surface, also stating that it leaves the coarser grained particles more tightly packed at the surface would add evidence of a deeper understanding

Question 3 (c)

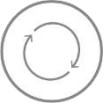
(c)* ‘Dryland landscape systems change only slowly over long periods of time.’ Discuss.

[14]

Many candidates understood the need to consider both short and long term change in the dryland landscape system. 8 marks were available for knowledge and understanding (AO1) of differing rates of change which typically included the geology of the area, and the seasonal changes from rainfall. There are also 6 marks for the application of knowledge and understanding (AO2) to analyse and evaluate the extent to which dryland landscape systems change only slowly over time which is where candidates can weigh up their evidence and form a judgement.

Section B overview

This section is dedicated to Changing Spaces; Making Places and is perhaps one of the first more 'abstract' topics that a sixth form Geographer will come across. In order to avoid falling into the trap of writing incoherently, candidates should clearly ground their examples and case studies in places they have studied. For this year's essay question, ensuring that flows of people were discussed in relation to a named place and its profile elicited the best answers.

	AfL	<p>It is important to remember that as well as the content given in the specification, candidates are also expected to have topic-specific skills which include being able to appreciate how qualitative approaches actively create particular place representations, analysing the impacts of different media on place meanings and perceptions, the use of geospatial data to present place characteristics and how quantitative data is used to present place characteristics. These skills can sometimes be forgotten as they are not content driven, and centres should make sure that they are delivered alongside and not separately from it.</p>
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Question 4 (a)

4 (a) Explain **two** ways in which emotional attachment to place can influence people's behaviour and activities in a place. [4]

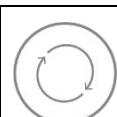
Candidates were at times unclear about what was meant by people's behaviour and wrote in general terms e.g. it would make them care about a place. Some candidates also struggled to be specific in terms of why they may have an emotional attachment to a place. It is important that specifics are given, rather than general commentary. The most effective answers talked about religious connections or specific events that could create an emotional attachment.

Exemplar 1

One way emotional attachment to a place can influence behaviour and peoples activities can be regular visitation. For example if your parents always took you to the same beach every year where you have positive memories you would keep going as an adult.

Another way is geographical fear as for example if there was a street where somebody was murdered you would avoid going down there when it's dark and tell others not to as well.

In Exemplar 1 the candidate achieved full marks – parents taking you to a beach every year where you have positive memories (tick) so you keep going back as an adult (DEV). Fear on a street where someone was murdered (tick) so you avoid it when it is dark (DEV)

**AfL**

When asked to explain two ideas/ways, it is a good idea to separate the paragraphs to make it clear which example is being discussed.

It is also a good idea to remember the command word – in this case “Explain” – will indicate how to answer a question. For this question candidates have to identify a reason for an emotional attachment and say why it will influence someone’s action, which gives the ‘tick / DEV’ parts of the mark scheme.

Question 4 (b) (i)

(b) Study **Fig. 4a**, a model of changing employment structure in a country by sector.

(i) Using evidence from **Fig. 4a**, identify one sectoral change in employment.

[1]

The majority of candidates were able to identify a change. Common mistakes included quoting changing figures without stating that it had increased or decreased. Where candidates did not achieve marks was usually when they misunderstood the term ‘sector’ and wrote about a change during one time period, as opposed to the tertiary sector, for example.

Question 4 (b) (ii)

(ii) With reference to **Fig. 4a**, suggest the role of **two** players involved in driving structural economic change.

[4]

Many candidates were able to identify key players – government and TNCs were the most common. Some misconception of what is meant by a player e.g. some students drifted to discuss the industrial revolution or the growth of technology, which unfortunately did not receive credit.

It is important that the examples and explanations are different. Some examples seen discussed the Boulton family in Birmingham, and then the Cadbury family with the same arguments; similarly, local and national governments both driving investment.

Exemplar 2

TNCs drive ~~sec~~ structural economic change ~~to~~ through choosing where to locate. When TNCs move from ACs to ECs, it causes a decline in the manufacturing industry ~~fall~~ in the AC, representing a fall in the secondary sector, as ~~however, governments may incentivise~~ can be seen in the post-industrial period in Fig. 4a. Governments can also incentivise high-tech companies to locate in ACs by offering them some type of funding. This would represent a rise in the quaternary sector, like in the post-industrial period in Fig. 4a.

While Exemplar 2 got full marks, the candidate did write a lot more than was necessary and they could have achieved the same marks with less writing, and therefore using less time – particularly important as some candidates did struggle to finish.

The candidate would have still have received full marks if they had written:

TNCs (tick) through choosing where to locate (DEV).

Governments (tick) can incentivise high-tech companies by offering them some type of funding (DEV).

Remember that leaving a line between the two points helps candidates (and examiners) to be very clear about which part of the question is being answered.

A close reading of the question is required and for the candidate to think about exactly what the question wants; in this case to players, and what they do.

Question 4 (c)

(c) Using evidence from **Figs. 4b and 4c**, explain **two** ways in which social inequality affects people's daily lives. **[6]**

Candidates often took a descriptive approach with this question, identifying differences between the two photos and then discussing inequalities, such as access to healthcare, education and sanitation. The most effective answers were ones which relied on the AO3 marks which made use of the resource. Candidate's answers were based in evidence, rather than just what they knew about inequality

Question 4 (d)

(d)* Using a case study, to what extent do shifting flows of people help to shape the profile of a place over time? **[14]**

This was generally done well, with candidate answers focusing on migration to certain places and the impact of this on the place profile - although this was at times implied. Case studies such as Toxteth, Birmingham, Stratford in London and Barcelona were generally done well although some candidates gave a history of the changes to the place rather than being specific to flows of people. Higher scoring candidates talked about how a place has become more multicultural etc. They also discussed other more important factors such as the physical environment and scored highly in AO2 as a result.

Section C overview

	AfL	The fieldwork section is an opportunity for candidates to demonstrate their learning from the two days' compulsory fieldwork that should be completed during the AS Level course. Candidates need to be confident in interpreting a range of sources including images, maps, diagrams and graphical representations in order to fully engage with the questions. The Geographical and Fieldwork skills in the H081 Specification (pages 35 - 36) give a detailed account of the content required and it is worth remembering that it is from these pages that questions for the exam are written, so it all needs to be covered as well as the topic content.
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Question 5 (a) (i)

5 (a) Study **Fig. 5a**, a sketch map of Lossiemouth, a coastal town in Moray, Scotland, and **Fig. 5b**, place profile information about Lossiemouth.

(i) Using evidence from **Fig. 5a** and/or **Fig. 5b**, suggest and justify a field research question appropriate for the Lossiemouth area. [3]

The 'suggest' command word requires candidates to give a research question and there is one mark available for this and the vast majority candidates could form an appropriate question. A word of caution is just to make sure that it is an appropriate question to the area referred to in the figure.

The 'justify' command word means candidates have to give reasons as to why they chose their question and these have to be firmly grounded in the evidence from the figures. Not everyone did this, but those who did, did well. It might include reference to the increase in tourism, the location of the museum, the marina for pleasure boats, or even the scale to highlight the area was reasonable to cover on foot in a day.

Question 5 (a) (ii)

(ii) Explain how **one** type of primary, quantitative data could be used to help you answer the question you suggested in (a)(i). [3]

	Misconception	While any un-manipulated raw data can be used as primary data which includes census data, as in the A Level NEA, candidates need to be careful with other sources. Police crime data (for example www.police.uk) is not raw data and therefore would be classed as secondary data. Naming one type of data is only worth one mark; the explanation part of the question is worth 2 marks, and candidates should remember the need to attempt the whole question, guided by the command words.
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Question 5 (a) (iii)

(iii) Evaluate the opportunities to collect data for the research question suggested in (a)(i) through the use of geospatial technologies, such as smart phones and tablet devices. [6]

This question was clearly challenging for candidates who wrote about general uses of phones and tablets rather than focusing on geospatial technology. These included geo-locating photographs taken while on fieldwork, or using apps such as ArcGIS or Survey123 where the location of the data collection is also collected at the same time as the data is inputted.

Exemplar 3

Using geospatial technology such as land use maps, too show the different answers that people gave too the questionnaire. This is a much quicker and time efficient way of presenting the data you've collected. However the technology may be expensive too buy if needed too.

This response is not focused on data collection. In particular the candidate talked generally about the use of the internet which was not relevant to the question. This highlights a lack of understanding of geospatial technology. As noted in the section introduction, it is mentioned directly in the specification but few were able to grasp the crux of this, to locate data at the point of collection, such as a geo-tagged photo or collection of latitude and longitude at a sample site.

Question 5 (b)

(b) With reference to a fieldwork investigation you have carried out, to what extent were the practical field methodologies appropriate to the investigation of core human and/or physical processes? [12]

Many candidates were unable to complete this question in terms of timing. Furthermore, those that did often misunderstood the question and did not link back to their theory/aims/hypotheses, instead simply described the method they did and wrote simple evaluative comments e.g. we didn't ask enough people. This was a case of candidates writing whatever they could remember about their fieldwork in the hope that it would be creditworthy.

There is so much scope to be able to write well in this section that candidates need to make sure they read the question carefully. Candidates could have written about an investigation into whether glacial deposits could be used to show the direction of the ice flow, where the practical fieldwork included measuring the size and orientation of the deposits, and determining whether it was sorted or unsorted. Coastal landscapes could also have been studied with the fieldwork focusing on investigating the physical processes which influence the formation of the landforms, by measuring longshore drift and the geology of the area. The extract below demonstrates how this can be done in a human investigation context.

Exemplar 4

We carried out an investigation in Salford Quays with the aim of investigating the impacts of rebranding in the area. Our hypothesis was that rebranding had ~~a positive~~ improved the image of Salford Quays. One method we used to collect

The self-report technique of a questionnaire was a good method to evaluate rebranding as the brand essence is a major part of rebranding and involves people's experience of the brand. The qualitative, subjective responses gained from the questionnaire gave us a good understanding of this. However, a weakness is that people may have given socially-desirable answers so the results are not reflective of people's real opinions.

What makes these two extracts from the candidate's response so good is that they not only directly linked to the hypothesis in the first paragraph but also links to the core theory, in this case rebranding, in the second paragraph.

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